

3/3/70

Dear Dick,

Do you realize that in giving up cigars I've saved you from a life of crime? Thanks for the stamps. I wish I had been able to hold back on the cigarettes. Immediately I worked my way down to five-six a day, but when I blacked out and then got nothing meaningful, either in testing or explanations, from the doctors, I got more nervous (and stay that way) and am just afraid to really cut back hard.

Your letter of the 25th came yesterday. While your conjecture that there may have been a close-up shot may be way out (it originates with Marguerite who shared it with me by phone in 1966), the fact sponsoring it is quite interesting. You make no reference to powder burns.

There are problems with it and with Howard's idea that the pre-autopsy examination is where the doctors removed a bullet. But not with what brings these concepts to mind.

I've been fascinated by those dust-like particles since reading it in Humes or Kellerman first. I had no ballistics knowledge with which to evaluate it, but I did believe it entirely opposed to the theory behind the Geneva agreement, one of the reasons why, as you may have detected in WW, I've never believed any military ammo was used.

My mind wanders. If I forget to tell Howard (I send you copies), a bone has to have been struck in connection with the non-fatal wound(s). After coming to this conclusion, I check it with Cyril. Assuming military ammo was used, there is no other way to account for what I found as soon as I saw the panel and autopsy-docs Clark reports: fragmentation. I suggest that the existence of a two-inch hole without fragments is indicative it may have been a special kind of non-military bullet if the rear wound is of rear entrance. It is not, from the available descriptions, the kind of wound that would have been made by a magic mushroom, by one of the small-calibre, ultra-fast bullets, is it? Howard believes it hit the spine, which is one of the two possibilities, the other being rib. I'd have to go back over old notes to be certain of my original belief, but I think, based on CD 1, the FBI's original accounting, it had to have been close to what Howard now postulates, sharply from the right.

To get back to the head, would powder show as metal in X-rays? From what I've learned, I suggest not. Metal is like fluorescent lights in X-rays, my radiologist friend tells me. Distinguishing here should be no problem, assuming the powder shows.

Could the set of facts you muster be taken as evidence of two different hits?

Without dragging out and rereading that part of the panel report, I encourage you to consider their semantics (as I've just written Fisher). To say "concentrated" is not to say there was no dust, not even a major deposit of dusting, of fragments outside that 45x8mm area. I cannot explain what this could mean. I'd wonder if that was not the point at which, from some reason, the major "explosion" of the projectile occurred. But what if you think of this as only the ~~xxx~~ area where the distribution of fine particles was most pronounced, rather than as a largely exclusive area. Would that change the conclusions you might draw from it?

In appraising what this panel was capable of, I'd be inclined to rule out what, strictly speaking, would be called "error" and think in terms of exaggerations, distortions, misinterpretations. I think they'd be more inclined to stay within the strict interpretation of fact but accomplish their (Fisher's) purposes by other means.

Would it help if you conceived that once through the relatively-thin bone of the skull, there was only the tissue offering least resistance? Would that alter the typical behavior pattern of bullets of whatever character could have been used, as compared with where most experience, probably most of yours, lies, in relatively-resistant muscle?

Is it possible the randomized distribution of larger particles need not be inconsistent with the relatively localized deposit of most of the dust-like particles, but not all of them?

Is it possible some kind of explosive bullet could have been used?

I have certain impressions that persuade me to rule out what Howard is now suggesting, a kind of updated Tink, and yours here. One, and in my thinking a very large one, is the constant presence of four agents with the body all the time the doctors were with it. I believe Kellerman and Greer never left the body unattended. I believe both quite torn up by the tragedy, esp. Kellerman. They'd never have been silent for anything like this, and it could not have been done, except in the plane, without their knowledge. I also doubt it could in the plane. More, this postulates a larger and a palace-guard conspiracy. I do not.

I think it likely you are here dealing with a major clue. But I think you require a new approach, one in which I lack the technical knowledge to help.

However, from my point of view, you raise it at an excellent time. I am in a position where I may be able to learn more about this, and I'd forgotten about the distribution of the larger fragments; There are some things I just do not commit to the mail unless there is a constructive purpose to be served by the risk, especially since it has come to the point where some of my letters are cut open before delivery, actually. However, it may interest you to know I have an appointment with the man with the first farry interest. I have, at his request, as a consequence of our intermittent correspondence, prepared a list of questions for him. This area is not included. But, if it goes as well as I'd like to hope, I have other proposals in mind. You should have inklings of some of my newer accomplishments. From the fact of these I take encouragement and I do hope other mutual benefits may eventuate. With luck!

You may also want to bear in mind what you can read between the lines of my correspondence with the frustrated youngster, who wants so much to have what I showed him, the earlier form of proof that you saw and a latter, much more explicit and entirely unequivocal one I have not been able to. If you have seen his picture, you can assume there is nothing haphazard in the pater annotation.

If you feel you want to take this up with Gary, I have several suggestions. First, wait a while and do some more thinking. Then, ask him a non-specific question, to see if he has access to such things. Although he seems inclined to do little to help besides talk, I also wonder if Cyril would not be a better one, again, a non-specific question. It is not possible to think this mess through without getting far-out ideas, but others are inclined to consider them as less far-out.